



**Testimony in Support of SB 957, An Act Concerning the oversight of Health Care in
Correctional Institutions by the Department of Public Health**

Dear Chairs Anwar and McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairs Kushner, Marx, and Parker, and Members of the Public Health Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Emma Polinsky and I am a resident of New Haven, Connecticut. In solidarity with the Yale College Democrats and Regulate DOC Healthcare CT Coalition, I stand in support of **SB957 AN ACT CONCERNING THE OVERSIGHT OF HEALTH CARE IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**. Connecticut is currently the only state where the Department of Corrections oversees and operates its own healthcare system. Last year the Public Health Committee sought to set forth actions to address these issues with SB 448 which became PA 22-133. Our request is that the Public Health Committee steps forward as courageously as it did last year and implement regulation and oversight of the Department of Corrections Healthcare system.

Current challenges in the Department of Corrections healthcare system are contributing to poor health outcomes for incarcerated individuals, returning citizens and economic burdens on their families. Poor health is expensive. Connecticut has paid out millions of dollars in lawsuits related to medical negligence with the Department of Corrections. However, there is a deeper cost to families and communities of returning citizens. Access to healthcare for incarcerated persons is a constitutional right covered by the 4th, 8th and 14th amendment; it should be affordable.

Six Connecticut cities are home to more than 50% of the state's incarcerated population but only 17% of the state's total population. Here in New Haven, there are 801 incarcerated per 100,000 residents. Each year in prison takes 2 years off an individual's life expectancy. This is an injustice to not only these incarcerated New Haveners, but incarcerated people all throughout the state of Connecticut. Act now to provide adequate healthcare access, a constitutional right.

In closing, I urge you to vote YES on **SB957 AN ACT CONCERNING THE OVERSIGHT OF HEALTH CARE IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**.

Thank you,
Emma Polinsky